



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release

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**SECRETARY NELSON STATEMENT REGARDING STATEWIDE EXPANSION
OF FAMILY CARE PROGRAM**

Supports Senate Bill 653 that Lifts Restrictions on Innovative Long-Term Care Program

"I am pleased that the Committee of Health, Children, Families, Aging and Long-Term Care moved forward today on the expansion of Family Care. Senator Carol Roessler has been instrumental in keeping this bill on the fast track so that seniors and people with disabilities can choose to receive long-term care services in their communities. I also appreciate the bi-partisan support of Senators Darling and Carpenter in keeping the legislation – which was co-authored by Representative Kaufert – alive.

The Governor understands how important it is that seniors and people with disabilities live in dignity and are able to make choices for themselves. We shouldn't force people into nursing homes if that is not what they want or need. Family Care is a win-win for everyone involved. Taxpayers save money, and seniors and people with disabilities are healthier, happier and are able to be more independent because of Family Care.

About 11,500 people statewide are on waitlists to receive community care. I hope that the Legislature recognizes the importance of this bill and moves quickly to pass it. A vote against expanding the Family Care program would have a chilling effect on all the hard work and progress being made around the state to expand Family Care."

Background

Family Care allows seniors and people with disabilities the choice to receive long-term care services in their own homes and communities. Family Care provides an entitlement to long-term care, using Medicaid dollars flexibly and not just earmarking dollars for nursing home care. People receive long-term care services based on their individual needs and preferences.

Governor Doyle's State of the State address in January set a goal of expanding Family Care statewide within five years and eliminating wait lists for long-term care services. The original legislation authorized in 1998 limited Family Care to areas of the state that include no more than 29% of the state population. Senate Bill 653 will eliminate the 29% cap on Family Care.

Family Care currently operates in Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Portage and Richland counties. An independent assessment found that Family Care saved an average of \$452 per person, per month in total Medical Assistance expenditures in the four non-Milwaukee counties during 2003 and 2004. Family Care also saved money in Milwaukee County.

Since January 2006, eight grants have been awarded to lay the groundwork for expanding Family Care statewide and eliminating waiting lists for community-based long term care. A total of \$1.4 million will be awarded this year to communities around the state for expanding the program.

For more information about Family Care, go to <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/LTCare/>

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